

**WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:**

1. A method for controlling access to a television set using a remote control unit having a finger verification

5 device, the method comprising the steps of:

(a) placing at least one finger on said remote control unit for scanning;

(b) obtaining fingerprint data indicative of said scanned finger;

10 (c) comparing the fingerprint data to predetermined reference data to establish a finger match; and,

(d) if a match is established, providing a number of channels associated with said scanned finger.

15 2. The method of claim 1, wherein if a match is not established, denying access to said television set.

3. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of allowing the display of one of the channels associated  
20 with said scanned finger upon receiving a request to view said one channel.

4. The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of transmitting the fingerprint data to said television set and performing said steps (c) and (d).

5 5. The method of claim 1, wherein the predetermined reference data used in said comparing step is stored in said television set.

6. The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps  
10 of transmitting the fingerprint data to a set-top box coupled to said television set and performing said steps (c) and (d).

7. The method of claim 1, wherein the predetermined reference data used in said comparing step is stored in a  
15 set-top box coupled to said television set.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein the predetermined reference data used in said comparing step is stored in said remote control unit.

9. A method for controlling the access to a television set using a remote control unit having a finger verification device, the method comprising the steps of:

(a) prompting said user to place at least one finger on  
5 said remote control unit for scanning;

(b) recognizing said scanned finger and storing a number of channels associated with the at least one finger to generate finger reference data;

(c) placing at least one finger on the finger  
10 verification device of said remote control unit to generate fingerprint data;

(d) comparing the fingerprint data to said finger reference data to establish a fingerprint match; and,

(e) if a match is established, providing the number of  
15 said channels associated with said placed finger.

10. The method of claim 9, further comprising the step of providing an indication as to whether or not the finger match is established.

11. The method of claim 9, further comprising the step of repeating said steps (c)-(e) if a match is not established.

5 12. The method of claim 9, wherein if a match is not established denying access to said television set.

10 13. The method of claim 9, further comprising the step of allowing the display of one of the channels associated with said placed finger upon receiving a request to view said one channel.

15 14. The method of claim 9, further comprising the steps of transmitting the fingerprint data to said television set and performing said steps (c) through (e).

15. The method of claim 9, wherein the predetermined reference data used in said comparing step is stored in said television set.

16. The method of claim 9, further comprising the steps of transmitting the fingerprint data to a set-top box coupled to said television set and performing said steps (c) through (e).

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17. The method of claim 9, wherein the predetermined reference data used in said comparing step is stored in a set-top box coupled to said television set.

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18. The method of claim 9, wherein the predetermined reference data used in said comparing step is stored in said remote control unit.

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19. A remote control device for verifying a user's finger identity in order to selectively change the channel displayed on a television set, comprising:

a fingerprint reader for generating fingerprint data;

a processor programmed to prompt said user to enter fingerprint data; and,

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a fingerprint recognition means for verifying that said user is an authorized user of said remote control device.

20. The remote control device of claim 19, wherein said fingerprint recognition means is located at said television set.

5 21. A remote control device for verifying a user's fingerprint identity in order to change selectively the channel displayed on a television set, comprising:

an input means for prompting said user to place at least one finger on said remote control device for scanning;

10 a processor; and,

a fingerprint recognition means controlled by said processor for verifying that said user is an authorized user of said remote control device based upon an indication that said scanned finger data matches predetermined fingerprint  
15 reference data.

22. The remote control device of claim 21, wherein said fingerprint recognition means is located at said television set.